

## Tips for Time Management

*"If only I had more time...."* How often have you heard yourself say that? If you are like most Americans, pretty often! Of course we know we cannot create a 25<sup>th</sup> hour for the day, or an 8<sup>th</sup> day for the week. What we CAN do is make the most of the time that you do have, with the result of reducing stress and accomplishing more. If any of the following situations sound familiar, you may benefit from the following time management techniques:

- Missing deadlines, feelings of constant rushing.
- Indecision about taking action, time spent on non-productive activity.
- Feeling overwhelmed, fatigued or listless.
- Not enough time for family, friends or for things that you like to do.
- Facing the day without plans or goals, feeling distracted from the important things.

Effective time management is a gift you give yourself, a gift of feeling more in control of your life. This is because "time management" is really "self management", meaning spending less time in nonproductive ways that leave you feeling rushed and frustrated and putting more time to use on what you truly value. Maybe you will even "find" time in your schedule for relaxation! The following are a sampling of tips and strategies for improving your mastery over your use of time.

- Set Priorities and Establish Goals: What are the truly important things in your life? How would you rank them? With your priorities established, you can now set goals that match them. Goals are most effective when they are organized on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis. For example, if a priority is to remain physically healthy, a goal can be to lose a certain number of pounds within one year, with shorter term goals of exercising four times per week for thirty minutes.
- Increase Productive Activities: Learn how to distinguish between activity (busy work) and productivity (something that accomplishes a goal) and how to direct your actions towards productivity. Make a "To Do" list, categorize your activities under A, B and C priorities and concentrate energies, first on the A list, then B, then C.
- Decrease Time Wasters: Don't expect yourself to do everything. Learn to politely and firmly say "no" at times, based on your priorities and goals. Delegate tasks when possible. Handle each piece of paper, mail or email only once, i.e., respond to it or dispose of it. Keep routinely used items in the same place so they can be located immediately when needed. Group similar mundane tasks (reading/responding to mail, making phone calls, etc.) and schedule specific times to do them on a daily/weekly basis.

*"Where do I start?"* These ideas were taken from the "Time Management" portion of the Employee Service Program's online Systematic Stress Management Program. If you would like some additional tips and strategies, visit our web page at [www.michigan.gov/esp](http://www.michigan.gov/esp), click on "Systematic Stress Management Program", follow instructions to link to the program itself, then click on "Time Management" in the upper right corner of the home page.